Creative Parameters of Urban Spaces

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INTRODUCTION

The perception of public spaces by general public and by specialists from other fields such as architecture and urban design is a spontaneous process of experiencing and remembering specific symbols. A perceiver of public space subconsciously creates a mental map of orientation and identification in a space. The most incredible spatial (associated with emotions) experiences are kept in memory and then used for qualitative evaluation of the space. This internal map participates. Significantly in the integration of man's relationship with the environment and in the evaluation of identity of the city and its places. Urban and social identity helps to create a positive association for people to the city and the popularity of specific spaces, places and locations.

In definition of the city's identity, Architect Igor Marko emphasizes on qualitative evaluation of the environment the idea of "city branding" (image of the city, city label). He says this not only in theory but also in the conceptual phase of his work.
"The identity of the city is created not only architecturally, but also psychologically. People have to take place as a new or transformed identity. And that cannot be sometimes done purely by architecture or urban design. It is necessary to create a concept which can be a strategic vision of the city. This is something that every city currently has. It's not just architectural or urban basis, but it's about the way a city is and differs from another city."¹ A practical projection of "city branding" is actually increasing the urban character in

¹ Creativity and identity are by cities complementary magnets of attraction. According to: „Interview with Igor Marko by Andrea Bacová In: ARCH 01-02/2012 p. 16
central urban areas especially by the eyes of a perceiver. By this ideological and superior horizon it returns to human scale for pedestrians and reacts to the real needs of people in public space. The importance of a perceiver is also stressed in Jan Gehl’s theoretical work and numerous interventions in humanizing public spaces.\(^2\)

Fig. 1 shows the model of historically structured square from the early 20th century, where the factors of urban character are easily readable; such as local dominant, a large number of people in the market, compact area with active facades facing the square, sheltered places or lamp symbolizing the identity of the site.

Fig. 2 documents the lego model named "City" that shows a basic unit of the city - urban block. On the outside, urban block takes place bustling city life with trams, cars, small kiosks, solitary greenery or corners directed towards both development axes. In the inner part of the block quiet area with park, playgrounds, seating and family life is accessible.

\(^2\) Today streets’ and squares’ return to a place with human scale, focused on pedestrians, atractivity and comfort, a complex atmosphere, is the main topic of the Gehl Architects. The topic is based on psychology of perceiving the city, it is a reviving principle for existing and new public spaces. Gehl Architects, focuses on working with clients in order to create mutually beneficial relationships between people’s quality of life and their built environment. Podľa: Doslov, In: GEHL, J. - GEMZOE L,: Nové městské prostory, ERA 2002
Professionals in the field of architecture and urban design understand the functioning of the city and perceive the factors of urban character and urbanity in a broader context. They consider public spaces the squares, major streets, parks, waterfronts as priority that play a significant role in the image of the city. Square is a specific center, climax, scene and stage of urban structure. Its strategic position is important for the city in terms of vitality and thus the popularity and attractiveness of the city in terms of its quality. The main square is a focal point to which the urban structure culminates and the city becomes hierarchically compacted. This is the place where the story of city goes on the most significant open public space. At the same time the main square and the group of other important public places are spaces for verifying and presenting the city culture, for meeting place for domestic as well as for invited people. The square represents its creators (architects, urban designers and artists) the location for verification of urban and architectural ideas. Finally the square is a free open space for performance of the current action. Here are the creative parameters of urban space most perceptible and accessible for research and evaluation.

**Creative Parameters in urban space can be perceived in terms of:**

1. city concept and its final architectural expression
2. subconscious perception and creation of public space as an urban scene
3. latest technology and contribution of science, internet usage and data transfer
4. dialogue between the city and its citizens - participation, activity and patriotism

**01. CITY CONCEPT AND ITS FINAL ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION**

The city concept forms the basis of spatial organization of urban structure. It concentrates on city-creating functions and landmarks in key urban poles, regulates accents and opens locations for the most important architectural creations. The concept creates links, intersections and wider urban context. Sustainable cities and communities need impulses of vitality and creativity.³

![Fig. 3 Creative cities index, source: http://calvertjournal.com/about](image)

The current idea of the creative city that is discussed by urban designers, economists, politicians and artistic leaders combines urban concept of a city and such as pipelines and cables, also digital telecommunication will not edit the urban structure completely but first customizes the existing one. In the past, new urban infrastructure was constructed by connecting the existing operational nodal points based on the previous networks. New infrastructure has brought changes in the functioning of the system to which it was connected. Like parasites transform their host, it has introduced a new distribution of the activities under the programme and finally unforeseen extension. This change is required from designers of a

³ Unesco sustainable goals 2015, ln: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/
program with completely different knowledge and skills than those which are required for searching for physical or spatial solutions. According to the renowned British urban planner Charles Landry, a creative city is also a city that prospers in finding innovative solutions for the challenges in today's modern city. Creative city works beyond cultural activities and cultural institutions even if it naturally incorporates them into its operating system. Mainly small and medium-sized cities with high potential for cultural development have the ambition to become a creative city. In big cities and metropolises, the ambition to be creative merges with the ambition to be popular and magnetic; that leads to a global power of cities.

Fig. 4: The world ranking map of global power of cities, Global Power City Index 2015

The map evaluates and puts capital cities of the world in a hierarchized order according to its "magnetism", its attractiveness. First London, followed by New York, Paris and Tokyo describe the up-to-date evaluation of their magnetic power and social impact. The hierarchy depicts cities' urban impact and world-scope meaning by which it mobilizes its activity manages economic, social and environmental development. GPCI completely evaluates power of forty outstanding cities of the world according to six main functions: economy, research and development, culture, housing convenience, environment and accessibility (functions representing the power of a city). What is reflected in attractiveness and magnetic power of whole cities starts in zone level, in attractiveness of city centres and quarters. When concentrated on socio-cultural values, urban potential can be enhanced, considering the power of creativity of city quarters. Cultural quarters and creative hubs possess certain common elements within urban projects: strategies for grouping cultural activities, cultural organizations, production, usage, experiments or presentation of the culture. Cultural city has got a chance to complete public spaces of a good quality not only by physical features but also by concentrating culture in the most important parts. Urban changes in public spaces can become a part of economic goals in a country within the development of creative cities. What is legible as vital city-making and urban quality of cities and public spaces is rated by creativity indexes in the frame of creative economics. Euro - Creativity Index, modified 3T index, according to R. Florid and I. Tinagli consists of Euro - Talent Index, Euro - Technology Index and Euro - Tolerance Index. These parameters are monitored within economic indicators of countries and in base points of cultural and creative industry support concepts.

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4 GPCI evaluates and ranks the major cities of the world according to their “magnetism,” i.e. their comprehensive power, http://www.mori-m-foundation.or.jp/english/ius2/gpci2/index.shtml


02. SUBCONSCIOUS PERCEPTION AND CREATION OF PUBLIC SPACE AS AN URBAN SCENE

The higher the quality of city base, the higher the quality of public space creating the scene for activities and forms of a place to stay in the city. When a city releases space for the pedestrians and creates pedestrian streets, squares, passageways, riverbanks, marketplaces and others with dominating pedestrian activities, an openness for placing the aimed as well as freely completing elements of a parterre, stages, market stands, fashion molos and add presentations, or extending the cafes, patisseries and restaurants emerges.

Urban concept with overlapping and connected these pedestrian places plays an important role for an orientation. The importance of connecting the node-to-node and dominant-to-dominant movement is reflected by planers mostly in big metropolitan areas and in big cities with highly developed infrastructure.

Urbanizing trend has to be accepted; currently it reaches more than 74% of whole population in cities of developed countries. This growth incorporates mainly the cultural activities offer, quality of services and urban infrastructure. The most recent development concepts describe the growth of cities in association with the significant growth of companies in the field of cultural and creative industry and with concentration of its classes in intensely urbanized regions and big cities. The more the cities expand, the stronger the need for public spaces of high quality from the horizon of a pedestrian - a perceiver is.

A scene of a public space is a multi-functional platform adaptable to city visions and to psychological and social needs of visitors. Then the urban structure hierarchy makes sense as far as coming to the city - even in a metropolis - means coming to the pole of meeting. However, this dimension is still not lost in the 21st century. Social impulses for people to meet in pedestrianized areas are apparent in recent urban environment - whether formed traditionally or in a modern way. Identification of a human with urban environment, his sense of belonging to a place and his freedom to choose a way how to spend free time in the city, all of these claim the reality.
Recognizing, staying in a place and remembering important urban spaces in emotionally formed atmosphere is what gives visitors motivation for vital activities. It motivates them to spend more time outside, to be creative, initialize meeting and coming to see and apticipate at social events associated with culture, gastronomy or relax. Creative scenes of a city invite institutions and citizens to participate to reach economic recognition and importance of places. This ensures the historically claimed model of a scene of a city public space - a place for shopping, for culture and social events with the most important officials and with simple citizens, too. Urban designers, economists, city halls, diverse professional groups and educational institutions are focused on the question of creative parameters of cities. The accent on urban regeneration, growth of city vitality and optimum urban climate is put into public space of city centers.

According to: Štefan Rehák: Kreatívna trieda a kreatívne mestá. Teoretický koncept a jeho limity
According to: Sociológia 46, 2014, Nr. 5, p. 599
Conceptual model of creative city, In:
Footsteps of pulsing life attracting the tourist rush, refreshing the restored monument sites and bringing the economic revival can be observed right here.\(^9\) Vitality and good conditions are caused by the quality of public space and its creative parameters. These meeting points - places for real social life - are important also from the aspect of socio-psychology. Having a coffee with friends, meeting at concerts in the square, walk by a riverbank, common day and feast happenings creating the paintbrush of the pedestrian city, insert human scale to a daily stressful life and give possibility to express oneself. Human parameters of the pedestrian city for all age groups mean a social control and security. They offer spatial reality and calm rhythm in the world of cities clogged by noise, light smog and virtual imagination.

03. LATEST TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE'S CONTRIBUTION, INTERNET USAGE AND DATA TRANSFER

"Options for satisfying human needs in the age of inernetization, the time of work and hobbies overlapping together, will be immense and architecture and urban design will have to react to it by creating diverse places and devices, institutions. (Brath, 2001, s.11) "So we need another innovation, we need new public spaces, towns and cities for the 21st century." (Mitchell, 1999, p.10)

More than being a pack of volumes and masses, architecture contains also digital information in the space.

"Interkonexia has become the hallmark of cyberspace, where it has developed a new culture based on interactivity. Cyberculture is moving towards a civilization with the widespread presence at a distance.” (Lévy, 2000, p.30) It is no longer energy consuming as former and it is not needed to travel today to get the information in recent state of art of technologies. Neither going to local libraries is inevitable. Bookshops, news stands, thaters, churches and even trees do have their own virtual equivalents. Students surf in electronic encyclopaedias; professors upload lecture synopsis on the web; businessmen publish catalogues and order forms on the internet; current stock market information is furiously spread onto the businessmen’s displays.

Today modern technologies enable varied virtual information, initiation fictitious space transformation, rendering virtual objects with holographic quality giving a vivid and almost perfect feeling of a reality into the street space. Technologies enabling us to change any surface into a screen are available. Showcase or advertisement surface thus do not have to be understood in its typical classical meaning as a two-dimensional image, but rather as a fictitious multi-dimensional vision - a product of a 3D technology. According to the scientists’ predictions, it is mainly "the most recent versions of virtual reality - so called augmented reality and mixed reality - that will affect the field of science and management, even the field of culture and architecture significantly in the future". (Vinarčíková, 2006, s. 91) Physical environment and virtual places can exist independently one with the other and it will mostly be completing rather than replacing or excluding the other within the frame of transformed formulae of the city life. Sometimes the nets will be used to avoid going anywhere, but the other times we will go out to create those nets.

Real public spaces will be lively when offering unique local attractions and also "smart places" offering digital connections. It is a trend to bear with oneself the most recent cybernetic and virtual devices and to use them in real spaces of the city.

\(^9\) The question of creative parameters is discussed by urban management and by various professional groups, one of the first educational institutions in the world is Graduate School for Creative Cities in Osaka, Japan. In: http://www.gscc.osaka-cu.ac.jp/E/abstract_gscce/
04. COMPLETING THE CITY BY INHABITANTS - PARTICIPATION, ACTIVITY AND PATRIOTISM

Creative potential in the cities also refers to the concentration of creative society, then organizations and resources for economic development, respectively in the system of use. Significant groups of creative class by responsible persons that play an important role of strategic and diplomatic character in evaluation of their common projects in terms of better quality of urban structure. Social potential in cities is directly related to the cultural and social characteristics and smoothly implements in lifestyle of population with an expression of local identity. The city as and urban complex is so obviously linked to its society that it can not be realised by the separation of completing the city and public space transformation from initiatives and participation of its citizens. The more residents are connected with the completion of the public space, the stronger and protectionistic relationship is created. (see tab.)

Activities in public spaces of Bratislava
* list of favourite groups and civic associations according to the International Conference Public Spaces 2014 (November 2014, Bratislava), their effect on dynamics of the city and its use in public spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>Creative parameters for the activities for people leading to time spent in public areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE COURTYARD</td>
<td>“Vnutroblok“ is an experimental platform aiming to stimulate public discourse and activating people’s interest in the city and public space. „We believe that a good public space is socially inclusive, ecologically sustainable, dynamic and innovative and its creators and designers are emancipated citizens that are aware of both the rights and responsibilities of democracy. “</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE GOOD MARKET®</td>
<td>“Dobry trh“ revives urban public space, open courtyards and streets for people, creates a place for meetings and experiences. It supports small producers and quality domestic products but also products of diverse cultures and ethnic groups that are parts of our society. The Good Market maintains an alternative lifestyle and presents cultural happening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE CYCLING COALITION</td>
<td>“Cyklokoalicia“ is a non-profit organization that aims to improve bicycle infrastructure in Bratislava, Slovakia. They are working closely with experts on pedestrian needs. More bicycles mean fewer cars and better overall traffic flow for all forms of transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE URBAN PLACES</td>
<td>“Miesta mesta“ is a project of special and popular locations in the city. &quot;It is about the idea of what makes a place popular or visited in city and country. It is also about love for Bratislava.” The project particularly focuses on endangered architecture and art in the public space that is not granted by respect, love, appreciation or care what rightfully belongs to them.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Zelená hliadka” - In line with the motto: “Because it refers to us” they want to highlight the problem of litter on the streets in the city and encourage people to engage in favor of their environment and residence at least that they will not multiply garbage on the streets. Their mission is not to replace the work of government and to make a world free of rubbish. They also want to highlight the issue of proliferation of adverts and billboards in Bratislava. At least they want to fix the limit number of illegal advertising spaces and free up more space for greenery and friendly public spaces.

M_P_ BA (The Map of Bratislava) is an online inventory of residents’ favourite places in Bratislava with their authentic recommendations and subjective opinions.

Social impulses are a significant role of a city. By publishing initiatives, motivation and subsequent impulses for conversion of public spaces coming from citizens themselves we can understand their needs, cultural maturity and identification, uncovering the causes of behavior in a given area and also prediction of further development of using the space. The participation of inhabitants on the transformation of city and its public spaces is an important democratic platform. Nevertheless, participation of population, publication of opinions and ideas on the transformation of the city is not enough. The strategy involving the creative part of society among the citizens brings higher acceleration for completion of quality projects. Finally, we cannot forget that social impulses in urban public spaces act as a variable factor in relationship between the humans and the environment. They have different temporality compared to the temporality of space which is changing much faster. Theoretically, this implies that the current social needs of the space and the defined particular space can rarely be well suited. "In practice, however, we are dealing with mixing social needs for selected area and places that meet a wider variety of social needs. Therefore one the hand, we can talk about the basic (determining) social needs for the space in a given period and on the other hand, the multi-functional and adaptable space." (Petříková-Kusý, 1999, p.42-43)

05. CREATIVE PUBLIC SPACE

Creativity promotes the vitality of the city. Increasing vitality of urban structure affects the completion of major urban spaces. Vitality of large cities leads to accelerated dynamic concentration more than to a vital completed substance. Subsequently, squares and public spaces are their copies. The consequence of this phenomenon is a city under great pressure of economic welfare at the expense of social, cultural and spiritual joy of its residents. Traces of such a dynamic concentration are exactly readable in its accelerated poles.

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11 Creative society brings higher level of individual creativity, skills and talents that affect economic effectiveness and creating job opportunities. According to BAGWELL, Susan: Creative clusters and city growth. In: Creative Industries Journal Volume 1 Number 1 © 2008, s. 33-34

12 Cities are overloaded mainly by bus transport because of high number of inhabitants. Inevitable need for technical superstructure - especially in operational nodes - leads to the loss of pedestrian scale and dominates the whole urban organism. Then the pedestrian movement is only concentrated in islands of pedestrian zones and hierarchy of other squares and boulevards. According to BAŠOVÁ, Silvia. Urbánna vitalita. In ALFA. Roč.19, Nr.2 (2014), p. 6, ISSN 1135-2679.
Support of modeling and soft-completion of public spaces, that also creates meeting points, is a representation strategy towards the city residents and visitors. It is also the image of the city's effort for reaching the idea of a sustainable lifestyle. Positive tracks of pulsating life attract tourism, revive heritage listed sites, bring economic recovery, offer spaces for meetings and ensure, social control and protection.

**A key word list of designing/detailing the friendly public spaces:** (Gehl, 2012, s.239)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROTECTION</th>
<th>protection from traffic and accidents - feeling of safety</th>
<th>protection from crime and violence</th>
<th>protection from unpleasant sense experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMFORT</td>
<td>possibilities for walking</td>
<td>possibilities for standing and staying</td>
<td>possibilities for sitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>possibilities to see</td>
<td>possibilities for listening and talking</td>
<td>possibilities for playing / unfolding / activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENJOYMENT</td>
<td>designing buildings and spaces in observance of the important human scale</td>
<td>possibilities for enjoying positive aspects of climate (sun and shade)</td>
<td>aesthetic quality / positive sense-experiences (good design and detailing, trees, plants, water)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**An additioned key word list of friendly public spaces:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMART PLACES</th>
<th>digital connections</th>
<th>sufficient and rapid information supply</th>
<th>Wi-fi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONS</td>
<td>patriotism</td>
<td>activism</td>
<td>participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRIT (IMAGINARY NATURE)</td>
<td>footprints in the pavement or in historical layers under the paving</td>
<td>reminding the identity through memorable events, important personalities, traces on objects</td>
<td>nature and educational trails</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City-friendly spaces (nice places for meeting people) significantly affect the visitor as well as the traffic and popularity of the given spaces. Elementary factors of urbanity can be evaluated on the basis of parameters of vitality and **creativity of public spaces** related to

- vital functions of objects and spaces
- concept of pedestrian zones
- creative scenes of public space
- creative cultural events
- participation of space users
To sum up these parameters interact in public spaces on

1. safety
2. relax and rest
3. creativity and joy
4. creation of relationships
5. creation of smart places
6. participation in spiritual values

The concept of creative cities - according to current sociological studies - shows opportunities how to increase the cities’ quality in the context of concentrating creative people in their major business groups. They bring new ideas into the city and change the institutional framework of economic welfare. Additionally the positive feedback works well. City Creation through selected areas, spaces and zones, the physical nature of the city, tends to concentrate departments and institutions, but also life in public places.

City Creation is urban basis for the creative functional and spatial expression of the city. Urban intention and economic model of creative quarters act together on structure full of dynamics and vitality. They influence the city development and popularity of employment sectors with an emphasis on culture in connection with tourist traffic.

Among the cultural district with creative potential, it includes the conversion of brownfield to cultural parks, educational and leisure time parks, as well as arenas and stadiums with facilities where sport is a priority and the entire area presents the offer of mixed activities and concerts, events, performances and gala evenings.

By magnificent concentration and interconnection of creative poles in some cities boulevards and avenues are formed. An exceptional example of the integration of both directions of the concept of creative cities (urban and creative revival) is the Parisian royal axis - Ax Royal. Historically structured longitudinal axis of
the city became the main compositional axis of Paris. This urban axis is combined with a natural line of the Seine River. Ax Royal presents a main development line of both historic and contemporary Paris. Rhythmically structured nodes of the royal axis are accentuated by prominent landmarks directed towards the area of Défense. There is the object of La Grande Arche through which the line of compositional axis opens up to the superstructure of modern Paris. The line concentrates on the most important locations of public spaces of administrative, cultural and commercial nature.

**Fig.7 Paris – Ax royal**

![Image of Paris Ax royal]

**Fig.8 Paris Ax royal - Place de la Défense, (author’s photography)**

**CONCLUSION**

As the Creative City concept raises the economic strength of the city, **creative parameters of urban spaces modeling lead to popularity and importance** of the public spaces for both active and passive users.

The stability of public spaces in terms of modeling creative parameters is represented by:
Creative cities and places, quarters and sites are the most attractive urban locations which support their dynamic development by creative and digital economic processes, especially through the cultural and creative industry. They document their growth and development despite the crisis and they also guarantee cultural diversity.¹³

Creative urban parameters contribute to increase the attractiveness of cities and places and also to increase the tourist traffic by its philosophy and design. In economy, the creativity reflects job growth. The progress and leading on the quality of such concepts presents the harmony between quality of life and urban environment. It is probably inappropriate to fully globalize these processes as universal guide for selected countries and cultural environment. If it was possible to identify with the Florid’s concept of creative cities, there would be a question whether the same laws can be applied in other countries in another institutional environment. Moreover there is a question whether the validity applies outside the metropolitan regions, namely in smaller towns and rural areas.

Florid’s concept of creative cities as a theoretical concept of urban development can be considered as valid only if its relevance can be applied in different socio-economic contexts. In post-industrial society with dominant customer services, technological changes, emphasis on science and education, it has already defined the so-called Creative Class. In current global information society characterized by required integration, the creative class becomes important and so the creative clusters and cultural districts. Harmonization of human urban development with qualitative parameters of creative districts brings effect and benefit. Problematic issues of metropolitan cities of today are more related to dynamic concentration. A full-fledged urban substance is loosing its quality. Vistas, perspectives, urban character and human parameters are underestimated. We are confronted with chaotic locations of the landmarks, losing character and identity of the wider center and also with too large shopping centers. These facts disorient residents and visitors although these motive forces could rebuild the contemporary city to vital urban institute.

Chances for development of creative places will grow hand in hand with quality urban and social concept of public spaces. „The present day functional changes of the inner town predominantly follow rules of the market economy, they are governed by requests of the owners of buildings and they are not adequately professionally coordinated and regulated. Furthermore up-to-date urban territorial plans with binding

regulation are missing.” The observance of human and social parameters of democratic city model is expected. The participation of citizens in creation of the city and its public spaces thus can be associated with their creative potential. These are the opportunities for institutions and general public to participate in the matters of the city, in city and about city with the offer of community groups with more civil than purely professional selection.

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